

REMARKS

The present application was filed on November 15, 2001 with claims 1-18. Claims 1-18 are currently pending. Claims 1, 8, 15 and 16 are the independent claims.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,734,296 (hereinafter "Dotson"). Claims 7 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dotson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,986,481 (hereinafter "Kaminishi '481").

Applicant initially notes that Dotson issued more than one year before the filing date of the present application.

With regard to the §102(e) rejection, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 8, 15 and 16 to clarify that the second differential pair of the claimed input stage comprises an emitter-coupled differential pair. An illustrative example of such an input stage emitter-coupled differential pair is shown as bipolar transistors Q4 and Q5 in the input stage in FIG. 6 of the drawings. It can be seen that the emitter of Q4 is coupled to the emitter of Q5 in this exemplary emitter-coupled differential pair.

The Examiner in the Office Action at page 2, section 2, argues that elements 200 and 202 in Dotson comprise the claimed second differential pair. However, it is clear from FIG. 3 of Dotson that elements 200 and 202 do not comprise an emitter-coupled differential pair.

Since Dotson fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claims 1, 8, 15 and 16 as amended, the §102(e) rejection should be withdrawn.

The fundamental deficiency of Dotson as applied to claims 1, 8, 15 and 16 as amended is not overcome by Kaminishi '481 or any of the other art of record.

Moreover, Applicant notes that the claimed arrangements provide significant advantages over conventional arrangements such as those described in Dotson and Kaminishi '481. For example, as stated in the specification at page 8, line 25 to page 9, line 2,

The FIG. 6 laser driver input stage 208 is thus configured to meet the base-emitter reverse bias constraint for the SiGe bipolar devices thereof, without the need for conventional input clamping circuitry and in a manner which does not unduly limit the operating speed of the laser driver circuit 200. For example, a laser driver utilizing the input stage of FIG. 6 can operate with the full PECL input specification range of 0.2 to 1.6 volt peak differential inputs, without risking damage to the SiGe bipolar devices.

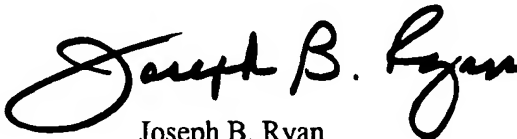
The claimed arrangements thus overcome the significant problems of the prior art as outlined in the specification at page 1, line 26 to page 2, line 16, in a manner that is not taught or suggested by Dotson or Kaminishi '481.

Dependent claims 2-7, 9-14, 17 and 18 are believed allowable for at least the reasons identified above with regard to independent claims 1, 8, 15 and 16. These dependent claims are also believed to define additional patentable subject matter over Dotson or Kaminishi '481.

For example, claims 5 and 12 indicate that the first differential pair of the input stage is configured to provide substantially unity gain. The Examiner does not address this limitation in the rejection, but devices 30 and 32 in Dotson clearly comprise a high-gain arrangement, and are therefore not configured to provide substantially unity gain. This is apparent from the description in column 4, lines 40-47 and 62-67 of Dotson.

In view of the above, Applicant believes that claims 1-18 as amended are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102(e) and §103(a) rejections.

Respectfully submitted,



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